



THE RIGHT SKILLS ► A PROVEN ADVANTAGE

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

(RFP# 7506)

ACE IT Program Compliance Audit

**CLOSING:
2:00 PM Pacific Daylight Time
January 9th, 2007**

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
(RFP# 7506)
ACE IT COMPLIANCE AUDIT**

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**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
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PURPOSE

The ITA wishes to select a proponent to conduct a compliance audit of its ACE IT program.

The length of the contract is anticipated to be 2 months with the deliverable completed by March 31st, 2007.

BACKGROUND

Business Context

The Industry Training Authority is a Provincial Crown Agency with a mandate to ensure that British Columbians have affordable access to quality, responsive, integrated, and accountable training that will meet the needs of industry and trainees and apprentices. Under the terms of the *Industry Training Authority Act*, the Authority is established as an occupational standards and certification body for a range of industrial occupations for which apprenticeship training is the predominant method of delivery. In this regard Section 8 of the Act empowers the ITA to:

- a) *designate a training program, including a training program for a trade or an occupation, as a recognized program;*
- b) *recommend to the minister that a training program, including a training program for a trade or an occupation, be designated as an accredited program;*
- c) *develop programs of training and apprenticeship and program standards for the purposes of paragraphs (a) and (b);*
- i) *establish standards, procedures and fees for examinations, assessments and services;*
- j) *set requirements for trainers funded by the authority to deliver industry training programs and conduct examinations and assessments of training and apprenticeship;*

The ITA Board has placed a priority on the establishment of rigorous and well-defined industry training program standards in order to ensure the credibility and broad recognition of the qualifications and credentials it provides to trainees and apprentices. In this respect ITA sees its role as approving and applying standards that have effectively been defined by industry bodies, including national inter-provincial standards mechanisms such as the “Red Seal” program. The basic premise of this approach is that industry is best qualified to define the skills and knowledge required for productive and gainful employment.

The Industry Training Authority (ITA) supports the provision of innovative new training approaches which expand the training opportunities for British Columbians. The ACE IT program is one such program. The ACE IT program was initiated in February 2005 and is designed to enable high school students to get a head start on completing an apprenticeship program while still in high school. Through ACE IT, students can take courses that provide them with both high school graduation credits and credits towards an ITA apprenticeship program. Students may earn credit for both the technical and work-based training components of an apprenticeship program as part of their ACE IT program.

Under ACE IT, the ITA provides funding to school districts to offer apprenticeship programs for two in-takes per year. School districts may access up to \$2750 dollars for each student registered in an apprenticeship program under ACE IT. Funding is paid out as follows: \$1000 is paid to the school district upon student registration, \$1000 is paid to the school district upon the student's successful completion of a level of technical training and \$750 is paid to districts upon the student's completion of 240 hours of work-based training (WBT).

School districts are responsible for registering, providing and/or arranging training and reporting technical training completion marks and WBT hours to the ITA. The ITA is responsible for approving ACE IT programs and payment of funding based upon verification of marks and reporting of hours by the school districts.

PROJECT REQUIREMENTS & SCOPE

Scope

The ITA is seeking the services of a qualified consultant(s) to conduct a program compliance audit of school districts offering the ACE IT program. Five school districts will be selected for this project representing a dispersed geographic distribution. The scope of the contract will be to verify data from registration through to payment of ACE IT funds for both the technical and work-based training components of the ACE IT program.

The proponent will be expected to designing and implement an audit including but not limited to the following parameters.

1. Technical Training

- 1.1. Target Group: select sample from all school districts with students in the February 2005 and September 2006 in-take
- 1.2. Points of reference:
 - 1.2.1. verify ACE IT student registration names and numbers at the registration deadline

- 1.2.2. verify names of students who have dropped out (incompletes) and any documentation sent to ITA notifying ITA of the student's withdrawal from the ACE IT program and/or apprenticeship program
- 1.2.3. verify names of students who have been substituted for dropouts (i.e., to maintain initial registration number) and documentation confirming that these students have been registered with the ITA (in AIMS)
- 1.2.4. verify current status of all registered students (names and numbers) -- correlate ITA record with school district record
- 1.2.5. verify receipt of funds due (verify registration payments; verify final payments against completions)

2. **Work-based Training**

2.1. Target Group: school districts in Feb 05/September 05 in-take only

2.2. Points of Reference:

- 2.2.1. verify the number and names of students completing WBT against ITA record
- 2.2.2. verify the number of hours reported for each student by the sponsor
- 2.2.3. if sponsor = school district then verify who the employer was and the number of hours worked with the employer
- 2.2.4. if sponsor = employer then verify number of hours with employer
- 2.2.5. verify that the student's work based training hours were done under the supervision/direction of a certified tradesperson
- 2.2.6. verify receipt of ITA funds for completed and submitted hours per student

Services

The consultant (s) will act under the guidance of the ITA Manager of Youth Initiatives and will be expected to

- Consult with the Manager to develop and document a methodology and process for conducting the audit including the development of recommendations to improve school performance
- Identify the school districts to undergo the audit process
- Conduct the audit
- Report results of the audit
- Make recommendations to improve school performance
- Make recommendations to improve ITA interaction with School Districts
- Undertake the audit project to meet the deliverables of this project

Expertise

Demonstrated expertise in secondary school administration, accounting background and knowledge of post secondary training is required.

Proponents should demonstrate individual resources with at least 5 years of experience in the following areas:

- Completion of school district audits
- Business accounting processes
- Project management

EVALUATION CRITERIA

Mandatory Criteria

The following are mandatory requirements. Responses not clearly demonstrating that they meet the mandatory criteria will receive no further consideration during the evaluation process.

1. The proposal must be received by email at mriback@itabc.ca before the specified closing date and time
2. The proposal must be in English
3. The proposal must be sent in electronic copy (Word or PDF format) by e-mail
4. The proposal is electronically signed as required by this RFP

Desirable Criteria

Each proposal will be reviewed prior to the selection process for completeness and adherence to the format. A proposal will be considered complete if all required sections are present.

All proposals will be evaluated against the desirable criteria listed below.

- A. Demonstrated expertise in project management
 - Specifically the ability to deliver projects on time (30%)
- B. Demonstrated knowledge and understanding of k-12 and post secondary school administration (30%)
- C. Experience in working with the post-secondary and k-12 school system on compliance/system audits (20%)
- D. Price (20%)

Only proposals that the ITA has determined meet the mandatory criteria will be evaluated against the desirable criteria.

PROPOSAL FORMAT

Any portions of a proposal which proponents wish to be treated by ITA as proprietary and confidential must be clearly marked as such. *Clarity and brevity are important.* All proponents must provide, at a minimum, the following information:

A. Proposal Cover Page (1 page maximum)

The proposal should include a title page citing the RFP number and the closing date and time

B. Transmittal Letter (1 page maximum)

The transmittal letter must be electronically signed by a person authorized to bind the proponent and must include wording substantively the same as the following:

The enclosed proposal is submitted in response to the above-referenced Request for Proposal. Through submission of this proposal we agree to all of the terms and conditions of the Request for Proposal.

We have carefully read and examined the Request for Proposal and have conducted such other investigations as were prudent and reasonable in preparing the proposal. We agree to be bound by statements and representations made in this proposal and to any agreement resulting from the proposal.

We further acknowledge and agree to the conditions for participating in this procurement as set out in the "Conditions for Participation" section of the Request for Proposal.

C. Table of Contents (1 page maximum)

Include a table of contents with page numbers.

D. Key Features of the Proposal (2 pages maximum)

Proponents should present a concise summary of their submission suitable for review by executive management.

E. Overview of Proponent (2 pages maximum)

Present a brief description of the company or companies submitting the proposal. In the event that the proponent includes more than one company, briefly describe the

contractual or other arrangements between the companies involved. Please note that one firm **must** be the general contractor with responsibility for all work and work products of all members of the bid team.

F. Qualifications of Personnel (2 pages maximum per person)

Proponents should summarize the qualifications of the personnel who will provide services to the ITA consistent with the desirable criteria. Ideally, the ITA is looking to have a single individual act as the prime consultant for the project. Please note this section **must** be limited to qualifications of the persons that the proponent will assign to the project.

All proposals will be evaluated against the desirable criteria listed below.

G. Demonstrated expertise in project management and delivery of projects on time and on budget(1 page maximum)

Proponents should provide evidence of projects they have completed where project objectives and deliverables have been achieved on time and on budget.

H. Demonstrated knowledge and understanding of k-12 school administration.
Proponents should provide evidence of projects completed related to school district audits. (1 page maximum)

I. Experience in working with the post-secondary and k-12 school system on compliance/system audits.

Proponents should provide evidence of having conducted compliance audits relative to the post-secondary and k-12 school system. (2 page maximum)

J. Price (1 page maximum)

Proponents should submit the per diem rates of each consultant who may be assigned to the project.

K. References for Each Assigned Consultant (1 page maximum)

Proponents should provide references for each consultant assigned to provide services to the ITA, provide a minimum of two references for similar project-related work completed within the past three years. These references should include:

- Project description;
- Project location;
- Contact name, telephone number, and e-mail address; and
- Date of completion.

L. Resumes for Each Assigned Consultant (2 page maximum per assigned consultant)

Provide resumes outlining the education and work history for each consultant assigned to the project.

Proponents should conform to this outline, including page limits, when preparing their submissions.

QUESTIONS RELATING TO THE RFP

No pre-proposal bidder's meeting will be held. Proponents may submit questions relating to the RFP to Mia Riback at mr Riback@itabc.ca via e-mail within the prescribed timeline. All questions and answers will be shared by posting on BC Bid.

PROCUREMENT SCHEDULE

The following timetable outlines the anticipated schedule for the Request for Proposal and contract process. The timing and the sequence of events resulting from this Request for Proposal may vary and shall ultimately be determined by the ITA.

- | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. RFP Released | 27 th December 2006 |
| 2. <i>Deadline for Submission of Proposals</i> | <i>9th January 2007, 2:00 P.M.</i> |
| 3. Proposal Evaluation | 15 th January 2007 |
| 4. Contract Award | 22 th January 2007 |
| 5. Project Initiation | 25 th January 2007 |

Please note that the ITA may, at its sole discretion, establish a shortlist of submissions. The ITA may also elect to invite short listed proponents to present their submission and respond to questions from the selection committee. Based on these interviews, the selection committee may adjust ratings of the proposals against the desirable criteria.

PROPOSAL SUBMISSION

Proponents must submit by email one electronic copy (in Word or PDF format) of their proposal on or before 2:00 PM Pacific Daylight Time January 9th, 2007.

Proposals should be emailed to: mrback@itabc.ca.

The subject line of the email should read: RFP 7506 ACE IT Compliance Audit

APPENDIX 1

ADMINISTRATIVE REQUIREMENTS

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
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ACE IT COMPLIANCE AUDIT**

ADMINISTRATIVE REQUIREMENTS

The following terms will apply to this Request for Proposal and to any subsequent Contract. Submission of a proposal in response to this Request for Proposal indicates acceptance of all the following terms.

Request for Proposal Terminology

Throughout this Request for Proposal, terminology is used as follows:

- “Authority” or “ITA” means the Industry Training Authority;
- “Contract “ means the written agreement resulting from this Request for Proposal executed by the ITA and the Contractor;
- “Contractor” means the successful Proponent to this Request for Proposal who enters into a written Contract with the Authority;
- “Must”, or “mandatory” means a requirement that must be met in order for a proposal to receive consideration;
- “Proponent” means an individual or a company that submits, or intends to submit, a proposal in response to this “Request for Proposal”;
- “Purchasing Commission” means the Purchasing Commission pursuant to the Purchasing Commission Act, RSBC 1996, Chapter 392;
- “Should” or “desirable” means a requirement having a significant degree of importance to the objectives of the Request for Proposal.

Request for Proposal Process

Subsequent Information

All subsequent information regarding this Request for Proposal, including changes made to this document will be posted on the BCBID website at www.bcbid.gov.bc.ca.

Enquiries

All enquiries related to this Request for Proposal are to be directed, in writing and by email, to the following person. Information obtained from any other source is not official and should not be relied upon. Enquiries and responses will be recorded and may be posted on BCBID.

E-mail: mrback@itabc.ca

Closing Date

One electronic copy of the proposal in PDF or Word format must be received by 2:00 P.M Pacific Daylight Time on January 9th 2007 at: mriback@itabc.ca

The subject line of the email should read: RFP 7506 ACE IT Compliance Audit

Late Proposals

Late proposals will not be accepted and will be returned to the Proponent via email.

Eligibility

Proposals will not be evaluated if the Proponent's current or past corporate or other interests may, in the ITA's opinion, give rise to a conflict of interest in connection with this project.

Evaluation Committee

Evaluation of proposals will be by a committee formed by the Authority and may include a representative of the Purchasing Commission or other government agencies.

Evaluation and Selection

The evaluation committee will check proposals against the mandatory criteria. Proposals not meeting all mandatory criteria will be rejected without further consideration. Proposals that do meet all the mandatory criteria will then be assessed and scored against the desirable criteria. The ITA's intent is to enter into a Contract with the Proponent who has the highest overall ranking.

At the Authority's discretion, the ITA may establish a shortlist of submissions. The ITA may further, at its discretion, invite short listed proponents to present their proposals to the selection committee and to respond to questions by the committee. Based on the results of the presentation / interview, the selection committee may adjust the ratings of the short listed proponents.

Negotiation Delay

If a written Contract cannot be negotiated within ten days of notification of the successful Proponent, the ITA may, at its sole discretion at any time thereafter, terminate negotiations with that Proponent and either negotiate a Contract with the next qualified Proponent or choose to terminate the Request for Proposal process and not enter into a Contract with any of the Proponents.

Debriefing

At the conclusion of the Request for Proposal process, all Proponents will be notified. Unsuccessful Proponents may request a debriefing meeting with the ITA.

Proposal Preparation

Signed Proposals

The proposal must be electronically signed by a person authorized to sign on behalf of the Proponent and must bind the Proponent to statements made in response to this Request for Proposal.

Irrevocability of Proposals

By submission of a clear and detailed written notice, the Proponent may amend or withdraw its proposal prior to the closing date and time. Upon closing time, all proposals become irrevocable. By submission of a proposal, the Proponent agrees that should its proposal be successful the Proponent will enter into a Contract with the ITA.

Changes to Proposal Wording

The Proponent will not change the wording of its proposal after closing and no words or comments will be added to the proposal unless requested by the Industry Training Authority for purposes of clarification.

Working Language of the Industry Training Authority

The working language of the Industry Training Authority is English and all responses to this Request for Proposal must be in English.

Proponents' Expenses

Proponents are solely responsible for their own expenses in preparing a proposal and for subsequent negotiations with the Industry Training Authority, if any. If the Industry Training Authority elects to reject all proposals, the Authority will not be liable to any Proponent for any claims, whether for costs or damages incurred by the Proponent in preparing the proposal, loss of anticipated profit in connection with any final Contract, or any other matter whatsoever.

Limitation of Damages

Further to the preceding paragraph, the Proponent, by submitting a proposal, agrees that it will not claim damages, for whatever reason, relating to the Contract or in respect of the competitive process, in excess of an amount equivalent to the reasonable costs incurred by the Proponent in preparing its proposal and the Proponent, by submitting a proposal, waives any claim for loss of profits if no agreement is made with the Proponent.

Proposal Validity

Proposals will be open for acceptance for at least 90 days after the closing date.

Firm Pricing

Prices will be firm for the entire Contract period unless this Request for Proposal specifically states otherwise.

Currency and Taxes

Prices quoted are to be:

- in Canadian dollars;
- inclusive of duty, where applicable;
- FOB destination, delivery charges included where applicable; and
- exclusive of Goods and Services Tax.

Completeness of Proposal

By submission of a proposal the Proponent warrants that, if this Request for Proposal is to design, create or provide a system or manage a program, all components required to run the system or manage the program have been identified in the proposal or will be provided by the Contractor at no charge.

Additional Terms

Sub-Contracting

- Using a sub-contractor (who should be clearly identified in the proposal) is acceptable. This includes a joint submission by two Proponents having no formal corporate links. However, in this case, one of these Proponents must be prepared to take overall responsibility for successful performance of the contract and this should be clearly defined in the proposal.
- Sub-contracting to any firm or individual who's current or past corporate or other interests may, in the opinion of the ITA; give rise to a conflict of interest in connection with this project will not be permitted. This includes, but is not limited to, any firm or individual involved in the preparation of this Request for Proposal.
- Where applicable, the names of approved sub-contractors listed in the proposal will be included in the Contract. No additional subcontractors will be added or other changes made, to this list in the Contract without the written consent of the Authority.

Acceptance of Proposals

- This Request for Proposal should not be construed as an agreement to purchase goods or services. The Authority is not bound to enter into a Contract with the Proponent who submits the lowest priced proposal or with any Proponent. Proposals will be assessed in light of the evaluation criteria. The Authority will be under no obligation to receive further information, whether written or oral, from any Proponent.

- Neither acceptance of a proposal nor execution of a Contract will constitute approval of any activity or development contemplated in any proposal that requires any approval, permit or license pursuant to any federal, provincial, regional district or municipal statute, regulation or by-law.

Definition of Contract

Notice in writing to a Proponent that it has been identified as the successful Proponent and the subsequent full execution of a written Contract will constitute a Contract for the goods or services, and no Proponent will acquire any legal or equitable rights or privileges relative to the goods or services until the occurrence of both such events.

Form of Contract

By submission of a proposal, the Proponent agrees that, should it be identified as the successful Proponent, it is willing to enter into a Contract with the Industry Training Authority in accordance with the terms set out at the end of this Appendix.

Liability for Errors

While the ITA has used considerable efforts to ensure an accurate representation of information in this Request for Proposal, the information contained in this Request for Proposal is supplied solely as a guideline for Proponents. The information is not guaranteed or warranted to be accurate by the ITA, nor is it necessarily comprehensive or exhaustive. Nothing in this Request for Proposal is intended to relieve Proponents from forming their own opinions and conclusions with respect to the matters addressed in this Request for Proposal.

Modification of Terms

The Authority reserves the right to modify the terms of this Request for Proposal at any time at its sole discretion. This includes the right to cancel this Request for Proposal at any time prior to entering into a Contract with the successful Proponent.

Ownership of Proposals

All documents, including proposals, submitted to the ITA become the property of the ITA. They will be received and held in confidence by the Authority, subject to the provisions of the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.

Use of Request for Proposal

This document, or any portion thereof, may not be used for any purpose other than the submission of proposals.

Confidentiality of Information

Information pertaining to the Industry Training Authority obtained by the Proponent as a result of participation in this project is confidential and must not be disclosed without written authorization from the ITA.

Reciprocity

The Authority may consider and evaluate any proposals from other jurisdictions on the same basis that the government purchasing authorities in those jurisdictions would treat a similar proposal from a British Columbia supplier.